



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 21, 2012

No. 73

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our provider, give to our lawmakers provisions for their daily needs. Give them grace to keep Your commandments, to accept Your guidance, to stay on Your path, and to walk in Your light. Lord, give them stamina to run until they reach their goal and to be true to You until the very end. Make them this day wise with Your wisdom and strong with Your strength. Help them to believe in Your power so that they may be certain that You are able to do for them more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 21, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,

a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION SAFETY AND INNOVATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to Calendar No. 400, S. 3187.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 400, S. 3187, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and medical devices, to establish user-fee programs for generic drugs and biosimilars, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are now on the motion to proceed to the FDA user fees bill. At 4:30 the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Paul Watford to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. At 5:30 there will be a cloture vote on the Watford nomination. If we are able to confirm his nomination, we should expect a second vote on the motion to proceed to the FDA user fees legislation.

OBSTRUCTIONISM REPEATED

Mr. President, this week the Senate must complete work on legislation that will enact crucial reforms that will prevent drug shortages and bring lifesaving medicines to market more quickly. Senators HARKIN and ENZI, a Democrat and a Republican, worked very hard to bring this legislation to

the floor. I am cautiously optimistic that the spirit of bipartisanship will continue because Democrats cannot pass this legislation without the cooperation of our Republican colleagues. I certainly hope they will allow us to advance this bill this evening without additional delay caused by another filibuster. I would like Senators from both parties to be free to offer relevant amendments to improve a worthy bill, but before we can get to work on this legislation in earnest, I urge my Republican colleagues to stop their filibuster. Americans living with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses are watching closely to see whether the Senate is capable of moving to quick action to ease shortages of crucial medicines or whether we will once more be paralyzed by Republican obstructionism.

Americans have seen that obstruction time and time again this Congress. They are frustrated with the slow pace of Senate action to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, Iran sanctions, and on legislation to stop interest rates from doubling on student loans. Earlier this month Republicans blocked an attempt to keep higher education affordable for 7 million students. But Democrats have not given up. I hope our Republican colleagues will come to their senses and allow us to prevent this crisis that affects 7 million young men and women before it is too late.

Republican obstruction and infighting has also stalled critical new sanctions on Iran. For 2 months Democrats have worked to resolve Republican objections to this bipartisan measure which passed out of the Banking Committee unanimously. The stakes couldn't be higher. Sanctions are a key tool to stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, threatening Israel, and jeopardizing U.S. national security. We cannot afford more delays to putting stronger sanctions in place. I hope my Republican colleagues will see

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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